

A Nostalgic Glance at Provo's Yesterdays

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It's interesting to take a look at yesterday.

You can wallow in nostalgia for as long as you want, thinking about how things were "back in the good old days." And you can sometimes get ideas for doing things in the here and now.

For the businessman, it can also bring a certain satisfaction that all those problem days are over.

Take for example, the grocer — yesterday vs. today.

We almost take for granted the wide aisled, and eye-level shelves of the modern serve-yourself super market which provide us with several checkout stands and little or no waiting.

How It Was Then

But think for a moment how it was back in those "good old days."

You walked into a store and waited at a counter. If you were lucky there wasn't somebody in front of you with a long list. Everyone had to be helped in his turn.

Many items were stocked on shelves up to the ceiling. In the smaller stores, merchants reached those shelves with long hooks, some equipped with mechanical fingers.

The storekeeper would reach

up with the hook and many times tip it until it would fall off the shelf. Then the grocer would catch it in a very casual way, set it in front of you on the counter and wait for further instructions.

Some of the "up-to-date" stores had ladders on wheels which would glide along in front of the shelves. If your grocer had one of these it was always fun to watch him climb up and move himself back and forth to get

items as you called to him.

The Old Cracker Barrel

Crackers and other bulk items were often kept in barrels on the patrons side of the counter. What percentage of those items were finally sold is still a mystery.

Bookkeeping for the grocer was done on little pads which had the family name on the upper outside edge. And each item to be charged would be listed on a line. When the customer would settle

up the pages would be torn out and — I guess, either given to the customer or thrown away.

Shopping as an Event

It was a big occasion going to the store. Sometimes mothers would send children with lists so they could avoid having to stop and talk.

Most of those old time stores provided high stools for patrons to sit on. Some had conventional

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